

VZCZCXRO1605  
OO RUEHROV  
DE RUEHJM #0789/01 1330943  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 120943Z MAY 08  
FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1465  
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RUEADWD/DA WASHINGTON DC//DAS-ZD/DACS-ZK//  
RUEAHQA/CSAF WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//  
RHMFIUU/CMC WASHINGTON DC  
RUENAAA/CNO WASHINGTON DC//POLAD//  
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE  
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS 7109  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4096  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3949  
RUEHNC/AMEMBASSY NICOSIA 5447  
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME 3865  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2426

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 JERUSALEM 000789

SIPDIS

STATE PASS BBG  
STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD  
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR ABRAMS  
CMC WASHINGTON DC FOR POLAD

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
LONDON FOR HKANONA AND POL - TSOU  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAO](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (5/12): LEBANON - IRANIAN EFFORTS  
TO EXPAND INFLUENCE

-----  
Main Stories:  
-----

The May 11 visit by Palestinian Prime Minister Salam Fayyad to the West Bank cities of Nablus and Jenin is good news on all front pages. Fayyad, shown surrounded by smiling residents, confirms that he is happy with the results of recent security missions to the cities in which Palestinian Authority security forces were sent to enforce law and order. Fayyad also reveals that the Palestinian Authority has arranged for additional training of Palestinian security forces, some of which will take place in Jordan. On a different topic, Fayyad stresses the importance of the upcoming economic investors conference in Bethlehem stating that, "the success of this conference is of great importance to the Palestinian Authority especially since [there is] ...international participation," according to coverage. In other economic news, Al-Ayyam reports that Fayyad confirmed Palestinian government approval of funding for 200 development projects, "in support of people in areas affected by the wall."

The front pages of the three dailies carry extensive coverage on the shortage of electricity in Gaza. The dailies highlight that more than 800,000 people in the Gaza Strip will experience a second night without electricity. The Gaza Strip's sole power plant shut down due to a lack of fuel on May 11 and no bread was available when bakeries were forced to stop operation, according to reports. Related stories in all dailies warned of, "humanitarian, health and environmental crises due to electricity cuts," however the dailies differ in their reporting on whether or not Israel will resume oil supplies on May 12.

Al-Ayyam's front page reports that Israeli Premier Olmert, "promises that he will remain in office to continue leading efforts towards

peace." The paper also records that American businessman Morris Talansky has confirmed that he has contributed to Olmert's election campaigns.

Al-Quds' front page reports on the questioning of Palestinian presidential advisors on Jerusalem affairs by the Israeli police on May 11. The story explains that Adnan Al-Husseini and Hatim Abdul-Qadir were held for three hours before being released. Related front page coverage in all papers, highlights a statement by jailed Fatah leader Marwan Barghouthi calling for, "early legislative elections and the formation of a national government." Barghouthi added that, "the right of return cannot be compromised."

Citing wire stories, the dailies continue to carry factual coverage on the Lebanon crisis. Al-Ayyam reports that the death toll from the latest militant clashes had reached 42.

-----  
Sunday, May 11  
-----

Developments in Gaza receive extensive coverage in the papers with several front-page stories reporting on the temporary opening for three days of the Rafah Gaza/Egypt border crossing to allow 550 patients to travel to Egypt for treatment. Other stories highlight the shutting down of the Gaza power plant for lack of fuel, leaving over 35 percent of the Gaza Strip without electricity, according to officials at the plant. In other news, the dailies report that Egyptian Intelligence Chief Omar Suleiman will visit Israel tomorrow to follow up on efforts for an Egyptian-brokered ceasefire agreement

JERUSALEM 00000789 002 OF 003

between Israel and Hamas.

"Western Official: The Bush administration will sustain peace efforts despite [Israeli Premier] Olmert's investigation," is a highlighted headline in both Al-Ayyam and Al-Hayat Al-Jadida. Citing a Reuters' story, the reports quote an "unnamed official" that this matter is an Israeli internal affair and that the U.S. will continue to assist the Israelis and Palestinians to reach a peace agreement by the end of the year. Other front-page reports note that Olmert's party is facing a critical and decisive time because of his corruption charges. Al-Quds reporting on May 10 leads with a quote from chief Palestinian negotiator Quray that, "the peace process is not dependent on Olmert" and President Abbas considers this is an internal Israeli issue."

The dailies cite a WAFA report that the PLO has signed an agreement with the Sudanese government for the latter to absorb 2,000 Palestinian refugees currently stranded on the Iraqi-Syrian border. The agreement, which was coordinated with UNRWA, will open the way for immediate transport of the refugees to the Sudan, according to the report.

-----  
Saturday, May 10  
-----

Black headlines announce the killing of five Palestinians in Gaza on May 9 in an Israeli rocket attack, according to the three dailies. The coverage also mentions the death of an Israeli in a Gaza mortar attack on southern Israel. Al-Hayat Al-Jadida rounds out reporting with news that Israeli settlers killed a young Palestinian near Ramallah on May 9.

The PLO convened an emergency meeting to discuss developments in Lebanon, forming a special committee to follow and report on events. Palestinian President Abbas repeated his call on Lebanese parties to dialogue. He further called upon Palestinians in Lebanon to be a unifying force and not become party to the conflict. Al-Quds highlights Washington discussions on possible responses to Hizbollah and its allies while also noting Hamas statements that Israel is the only beneficiary of the "internal turbulence" in Lebanon.

Peaceful demonstrations by Palestinians against the wall captures a front page headline in Al-Quds which reports on demonstrations held

in Bethlehem and surrounding villages. Coverage accompanies a photo of Palestinian children holding the Palestinian flag and blocking the advance of Israeli soldiers. Dozens of people were reported injured by the Israelis, including two children. In related reporting, Al-Ayyam runs a photo of children in Ramallah carrying symbolic keys in a peaceful demonstration to commemorate al Nakba (the catastrophe).

-----  
BLOCK QUOTES:  
-----

¶1. Al-Quds independent carries an op-ed by veteran columnist Faisal Abu-Khadra entitled, "Sixty years after the catastrophe... Israeli-Palestinian negotiations are at a stand-still" (5/12): "Almost fifteen years have passed since the Palestinian-Israeli agreement [Oslo] and Israel is still the only winner, while the Palestinians cause faces deterioration. If we review the points of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement, we see that the declaration of principles has beautiful wording, but without any commitment from

JERUSALEM 00000789 003 OF 003

the Israeli side. [at that time] The Israeli Government and the Palestinian team are in agreement that the time is right to end centuries of confrontation and conflict and to recognize each others' legitimate rights; to work on living peacefully together in dignity. ... It is unfortunate that Israel is increasing its demands and conditions on us when we have done more than what Israel asked for. Without a doubt, the Palestinian negotiator is responsible for half of what has happened to the cause in terms of compromise, while the other half is due to Israeli arrogance. Sixty years have passed since the catastrophe... but all injustice has an end. And the end is coming soon for the dreams of the Palestinian people."

¶2. Independent Al-Ayyam carries an op-ed by veteran columnist Samih Shbaib entitled, "Beirut events" (5/12): "what happened in Beirut a few days ago is not an accident and not a snap reaction to the decisions of the government. ... it is part of Iranian efforts to expand influence at the expense of Arab and Egyptian authority. What happened [was a] surprise for all Lebanese, who never expected for a moment that Hizbollah would take control of Beirut by militant means. This will turn things upside-down and completely change the rules of the game... "

WALLES